

VZCZCXRO7323
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHKUK
DE RUEHLB #1915/01 1641447
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 131447Z JUN 06
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4023
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 2614
RHMFISS/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 07 BEIRUT 001915

SIPDIS

SIPDIS
NOFORN

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/I; NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/SINGH/WERNER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/09/2031
TAGS: [PINR](#) [PGOV](#) [FR](#) [LE](#) [SA](#)
SUBJECT: MGLE01: INFORMATION ON SA'AD HARIRI

REF: STATE 93004 (NOTAL)

Classified By: Jeffrey Feltman, Ambassador. Reason: Sections 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C/NF) Reftel requested information on Member of Parliament Sa'ad Hariri. Embassy Beirut's answers are keyed to the questions as set forth in reftel.

HARIRI'S PERSONALITY

¶2. (C/NF) Hariri is open, engaged, generally warm and friendly, and easily accessible (when he is in Beirut) to USG officials. With his Georgetown University education and fluent, colloquial English, he easily adopts an American-style approach to visiting Americans (while affecting a more "Saudi" demeanor to traditional Arab visitors, or so we have been told). He is also prone to quick anger, especially when facing criticism. When angry, he tends to sulk and cut off discussions. He is particularly sensitive to any whiff of patronizing attitudes on the part of those whom he suspects of seeing him as inexperienced. We note, however, that he often shifts course after hearing criticism, suggesting to us that, whatever his initial discomfort, he mulls over even those messages he does not like.

¶3. (C/NF) His attention span is fairly short, with his mind quickly digesting broad outlines of subjects and racing from one topic to the next. It is rare for him to stay on one topic for more than a few minutes at a time, and he often engages in "multi-tasking" -- flipping through channels on a flat screen TV (which, like so many Hariri possessions, is supersized), clipping cigars, paging aides, all while keeping track of the discussion at hand. Unlike his father, who consistently maintained a poker face that masked his true feelings, the younger Hariri is expressive. Like his father, however, he exudes supreme self-confidence, often saying, in reassuring tones, "Don't worry," when questioned about tactics. Many accuse him of overconfidence, in fact, while others (playing the game of amateur shrinks) argue that his projection of supreme confidence is a mask for insecurity at discovering himself in a political leadership position thrust unexpectedly upon him.

¶4. (C/NF) We have noticed that Hariri becomes impatient in particular when two general subjects are raised: first, other prominent Sunni figures in Lebanon, and, second, Christian perceptions of excessive Sunni/Hariri power and ambitions. When we suggest, for example, that he have more high-profile consultations with Tripoli MPs like Mohammed Safadi or Mosbah al-Ahdab (two Sunnis who are allied with,

but not formally part of, Hariri's Future Movement), he is dismissive. "I am the Sunni leader of Tripoli," he once told us (although whether out of misguided conviction or out of bluster we do not know) when we suggested that his neglect of Tripoli's Sunnis might allow pro-Syrians to fill the vacuum -- as seems now to be happening.

15. (C/NF) As for the Christian fears (also present during his father's lifetime) that Hariri's stupendous wealth and power allows him (or even compels him) to increase Sunni (or, to quote paranoid Christians, "Saudi") power in Lebanon at the Christians' expense, he accuses the Maronites of being simultaneously demanding and paranoid. He dismisses, for example, as exaggeration the many Christian complaints (including from Maronite Patriarch Sfeir) about the high ratio of recent Sunni appointments in the Internal Security Forces. We learned more recently from first-hand experience that Hariri also refuses to discuss the negative perception left on the Christians and on UNIIIC Chief Serge Brammertz by one of his closest advisors. We wonder if this indicates an inability to look honestly at the quality of his inner circle. If, as some of those amateur shrinks say, he is insecure, perhaps this insecurity prevents him from asking whether those loyal to him are really the most valuable advisors he could pick.

16. (C/NF) We also note that rumors constantly circulate about Saad's private life -- numerous mistresses, unseemly drinking habits, rambunctious behavior, etc. Since his assumption of a public role, we have seen no evidence in Lebanon to confirm these "wild boy" stories. Samir Ja'ja' once remarked to us with wonder that, besides non-alcoholic beverages, Saad served only saki rice wine at a dinner he attended in Qoreitem. We noted a particular impressive

BEIRUT 00001915 002 OF 007

collection of Cheval Blanc vintages on the Hariri plane lent to Siniora for the PM's March Washington visit. But, if Saad is pursuing wine, women and song these days, he is doing so extremely discreetly in Beirut or else confining such extracurricular activities to his frequent foreign travels. Saad tells us that he keeps his family in Saudi Arabia rather than Lebanon for security reasons. (According to rumors, one reason why Saad -- Rafiq's second son -- was given the political mantle rather than Baha', the eldest, was because Baha' had some personal issues that might have harmed his political chances.)

HARIRI'S MANAGEMENT STYLE

17. (C/NF) In his discussions with us, Hariri tends to stick to the big picture, focusing on regional strategies, broad issues affecting Lebanon, etc. In keeping with his self-perception as Lebanon's Sunni leader, he wants to be seen, we believe, as someone engaged in "Big Think," leaving the details to be filled in by others. When Fouad Siniora was forming his cabinet in July 2005, for example, Hariri was involved in the discussions of the policy statement of the cabinet and the overall balance within the cabinet. He believed strongly that Hizballah should be included for the first time, as a means to nudge Hizballah toward becoming a more normal political party.

18. (C/NF) But we know from Siniora that Hariri (who had only recently moved to Lebanon) did not get involved in the selection of the names for the cabinet, letting Siniora work out who would take what portfolio. While Siniora surely had a good sense of where Hariri "red lines" might be, we know that he in some cases made appointments that even then made Hariri uncomfortable. Tariq Mitri's appointment as Minister of Culture comes to mind: Hariri told us that he didn't trust Mitri (whom he suspected -- since proven incorrectly -- as being a "closet Lahoudite") but did not veto Siniora's choice.

¶9. (C/NF) Now, it appears that, the more familiar Hariri becomes with the Lebanese scene, the more involved he is becoming with the details as well as the broader picture, in the same way his father could both think strategically and manipulate the details to his political advantage. For example, Hariri has suggested to us that he now regrets permitting Siniora to appoint so many "technocrats" (shorthand here for Minister of Finance Jihad Azour and Minister of Economy and Trade Sami Haddad) rather than people with useful political bases of their own. Certainly the perception exists that people close to Hariri have obtained his approval for a number of appointments within the civil and security services. When we have a concern about a particular appointment or government policy, we now play it safe and try to explain our concerns to both Hariri (if he is in town) and Siniora. We are convinced that it was Hariri who finally pushed Siniora into accepting a slate of judges, resisted by Siniora for weeks, for the Higher Judicial Council.

¶10. (C/NF) Saad's democratic credentials have yet to be proven, but nothing in his background would suggest that democratic rough-and-tumble politics and power-sharing comes naturally to him. His management style suggests that he is much more comfortable with top-down decision-making. He does not tend to be broadly inclusive of people or alternative views. Perhaps reflecting his business background or his Saudi connections, he prefers making deals in cigar-smoke-filled rooms far from the public eye over give-and-take consultations with his Lebanese electorate.

¶11. (C/NF) When Hariri meets with his own constituents, he often tries to strike populist sentiments, but we do not see much evidence of public opinion having much of an impact on his views. He views himself as a leader and, indeed, the "primus inter pares" among the other political figures in Lebanon. He has a proclivity to expect deference, not dissidence or debate. He postures as one who does not cultivate public support as much as expect it as his natural due.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

¶12. (C/NF) Saad's position as the son of Rafiq Hariri includes both strengths and weakness. As a strength, he inherited an effective political and financial machine that

BEIRUT 00001915 003 OF 007

is at his service. As demonstrated by the frequency of his meetings with world leaders, he also has, because of his father's connections and influence, many international contacts that he can use in the service of Lebanon. In addition, at least initially, he also enjoyed widespread public sympathy and support in Lebanon, even beyond the Sunni community, because of his father's assassination. It is worth remembering that, twice, Saad pulled off what most people described as impossible: first, in the final round of Lebanon's 2005 legislative elections, Saad's personal interventions in the north led to the March 14 movement's total sweep of the seats; second, when Saad defied popular expectations and used the Hariri machine to get perhaps half a million Lebanese to gather on the one-year anniversary of his father's death. His success in these two events is due to a combination of the strengths of his father's legacy as well as impressive personal charisma as a public speaker.

¶13. (C/NF) But the inheritance from his father is also a curse. Saad is not Rafiq. The expectations that he could immediately assume the role of his father inevitably led to disappointments. Saad does not have the local knowledge base of his father, and, while astonishingly rich, he does not have the same massive fortune: the Hariri money is now split among six heirs (five siblings plus Saad's step-mother). In just over a year since he entered public life, Hariri still needs to find the right balance between using his father's

legacy and emerging as an independent political player in his own right. We believe that his recent disenchantment with Hizballah (after his flirtation with Nasrallah, with whom he hoped to conclude some kind of deal on Emile Lahoud's presidency, among other issues) shows a welcome maturity in his political views. But he still puts, in our view, too much emphasis on deals made among political leaders while neglecting to cultivate needed public buy-in.

SAAD'S INNER CIRCLE AND ADVISORS

¶14. (C/NF) Like many rich and powerful people, Saad has acquired an almost "royal court" around him, with loyal retainers and opportunists filling the halls outside his office. Few within this crowd dare to offerQst assessments (nor would Saad solicit them). In terms of those with whom he does share policy thinking, we believe that Saad relies most closely on Salim Diab, Hani Hammoud, and Wissam Hassan, with Ghattas Khoury on the outer fringes of the inner circle. While jettisoning some of his father's advisors, he inherited this circle from his father, although Hassan is playing a more important role under Saad than under his father:

-- Salim Diab: A wealthy Sunni businessman from Beirut, Diab is unique among Saad's advisors in that he does not need to rely on Hariri money or influence. He is the most independent of Saad's circle, although we do not know whether he uses this independence to share candid views or not. We estimate that he is around 60 years old. Once an MP in Rafiq Hariri's bloc, he chose not to run again in 2000. An old-style political "fixer," he is deeply involved in local political issues. He is often the one to decide who is appointed or nominated to what local post, what services should be extended to whom, etc. (Diab was in charge of the olive oil distribution to the poor that got Rafiq Hariri in trouble with the GOL only two days before he was assassinated, when Syrian-appointed security chiefs accused Hariri of trying to bribe potential voters through charity.) We do not think Diab gets involved in broader strategic thinking. Diab is one of the few of Beirut's upper-class Sunnis who joined the Hariri political movement, which is otherwise dominated by the Sunni "masses." Others of Diab's class-fixated Sunni elite tend to look down their noses at Rafiq Hariri's humble beginnings and hope to recapture the role of Beirut's traditional Sunni elite at the expense of the "arriviste" Hariri clan.

-- Hani Hammoud: Probably in his late 30s, Hani is editor-in-chief of Mustaqbal (Future) newspaper, having taken over Future when Rafiq Hariri fired his predecessor, Fadl Chalaq (now head of the Council for Reconstruction and Development and a reliable foe of Siniora). Smart and excitable, Hani is the rabble-rouser of the Future political movement, always pushing for more radical positions and in favor of street action. Hani predicatably pushes for street demonstrations and rallies as the solution to all ills. Hariri turns to him for advice on Lebanese media and PR, leaving the international press advisory role to the

BEIRUT 00001915 004 OF 007

Washington-based Amal Mudalalli. (Hammoud and Mudalalli are known to be wildly jealous of one another.) Hani probably has more "face time" with Hariri than anyone else among the advisors.

-- Wissam Hassan: Previously in charge of Rafiq Hariri's security detail (but absent from Hariri's side on the day of his assassination -- leading to all sorts of conspiracy theories), Hassan now advises Hariri on all security-related matters, from how to maintain personal security to what Lebanon's security policies and even procurement should be. Hassan now heads a new up-and-coming intelligence bureau inside the Internal Security Services. Hassan is distrusted, even hated, by other Lebanese figures, including most March

14 Christian leaders as well as Walid Jumblatt, but Hariri -- who claims to have examined Hassan's background and loyalty with particular scrutiny -- is a stout defender of his advisor.

-- Ghattas Khoury: Saad uses Khoury (a former MP from Beirut on Hariri's list, who was "sacrificed" in the 2005 elections in favor of Solange Gemayal) to convey messages to Maronite Patriarch Sfeir, Druse leader Walid Jumblatt, and this and other embassies. Saad has told us that he trusts Ghattas' ability to deliver messages in both directions accurately and without embellishment. Unlike the previous three advisors, Ghattas is Christian, significant in the Sunni-dominated Hariri circles. Ghattas claims to us that he can speak candidly with Saad, but we have never heard him do so in our presence. Saad may feel a certain obligation to Ghattas, given that he was loyal to Rafiq yet removed by Saad from elections Ghattas would have readily won. Ghattas showed some independence even from Rafiq, when he defied the elder Hariri's order to his parliamentary bloc to vote in favor of Emile Lahoud's presidential extension. As another example of Saad having allowed Siniora to -- largely -- pick his own cabinet in July 2005, Ghattas expected to be rewarded with a ministerial portfolio after he withdrew from the legislative elections at Saad's request. Saad asked Siniora to consider Ghattas but did not push when Siniora did not include him.

¶15. (C/NF) To the distress of some of his more confessionally-focused Sunni followers, Saad also surrounds himself during his travels with Shia MP (from the Hariri bloc) Bassam Saba' and Deputy Parliament Speaker (and Greek Orthodox) Farid Mekkari. For weeks earlier this year, Mekkari even cited an unknown security threat to justify moving into the Hariri's Qoreitem residence. But, as neither of these figures has much influence within their own communities, we get the sense that they serve more as amusing company and "yes-men" than as candid advisors. Saad also seems to take the views of Minister of Telecommunications Marwan Hamadeh (a Druse MP from Jumblatt's bloc) seriously, although we note that he uses Khoury, not Hamadeh, to communicate with Jumblatt.

¶16. (C/NF) One mystery for us is the extent of the influence of the Paris-based Nazek Hariri, Rafiq's widow and Saad's stepmother, on Saad. People tell us that Nazek and Saad eye each other suspiciously, yet Nazek potentially could use the power of the purse over Hariri charities she controls to influence Saad. (Nazek is also widely believed to be the keeper of Hariri family grudges, always looking to get even with those she believed slighted her late husband.) We do not believe that elder brother Baha' has much influence on Saad, and the other siblings (Fahd, Eyman, and Hind) are not playing a political role.

¶17. (C/NF) What is also interesting is who Hariri does not rely on: The two advisors closest to his father were Fouad Siniora and former Minister of Justice Bahej Tabbarah. Hariri does not seem to rely on Siniora for advice (see below). Tabbarah remains influential through Nazek, but -- unlike during Rafiq's lifetime -- he is no longer part of the circle of advisors and syncophants at the Hariri household. Tabbarah seems to have no independent relationship with Saad.

RELATIONS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER, OTHERS

¶18. (C/NF) The Hariri-Siniora relationship is currently a troubled one, although both men vow to fix it. (We do not know yet whether a 6/10 one-on-one lunch, brokered by various intermediaries, "fixed" the relationship or not.) The problem seems to be one of pride: Siniora bristles under the perception that Saad views him as a hired hand, and Saad

BEIRUT 00001915 005 OF 007

perceives that Siniora treats him as a little boy. Other

leaders in the National Dialogue have told us that they cringe when Saad addresses Siniora around the table, using what they describe as a patronizing tone and theatrically correcting himself in addressing Siniora -- "Fouad, oh, I mean (laughing), 'Mr. Prime Minister.'"

¶19. (C/NF) From a close partnership in the period immediately following Rafiq Hariri's death (when Siniora more than anyone seemed to guide Saad through those initial terrible weeks of condolences and political consolidation), Hariri and Siniora now seem to share mutual antipathy. This seems based on style and personalities more than substance. Siniora tends to micro-manage and plods methodically (and often painfully slowly) through issues, mastering details along the way. Siniora is extremely cautious but, once he makes up his mind, stubborn. Hariri is impatient, desirous of action, and does not understand why Siniora does not simply follow orders. Whereas Siniora often adopts a conciliatory approach, Hariri chooses confrontation. (Both approaches, of course, have their place, and Siniora and Hariri strike us as equally bad in choosing which path to pursue when.)

¶20. (C/NF) While Saad vigorously denies it, most people believe that Saad is jealous of the international attention and respect given to Siniora. As Siniora is despised by Rafiq's widow Nazek (who finds Siniora's wife particularly unbearable and allegedly screamed when she heard Siniora was taking his wife with him to Washington in March), Nazek may also have poisoned Saad's view of Siniora or at least fanned the flames of resentment in his mind.

¶21. (C/NF) As for Walid Jumblatt, Saad has always expressed deep respect to us regarding Jumblatt, even when the Druse leader was making statements about Hizballah and Syria that Saad dared not repeat and thought were unwise. We get the sense that Hariri views Jumblatt as a legitimate and valuable partner. While some Lebanese claim that Saad defers to Jumblatt as the more senior politician, we think it would be uncharacteristic of Saad to see Jumblatt (or any other Lebanese figure) as his superior. Jumblatt recently revealed to us an interesting dimension of his relationship with the Hariris: apparently, for years, Rafiq Hariri provided Jumblatt with USD 250,000 monthly to consolidate his political position among the Druse. Saad has not provided any financial support to Jumblatt since the May-June 2005 legislative elections.

¶22. (C/NF) As for Ja'ja', Saad seems to have almost wistful hopes that Ja'ja were more popular among the Christians. We guess that he would like to have a tidy troika -- Saad, Jumblatt, Ja'ja' -- in which decisions for the March 14 movement could be made swiftly and safely out of public view and away from criticism. While Saad has indicated an earlier falling-out between Nassib Lahoud and his father, Saad now claims (sincerely, we believe) to support Nassib Lahoud's presidential ambitions. He expresses impatience with Boutros Harb and Nayla Mouawad, seeing them as "too Christian" to be good for Lebanon (although we are certain he would back either for president, if he was assured Lahoud was on his way out).

¶23. (C/NF) We believe that Michel Aoun is the Lebanese politician Saad Hariri most detests. The bad feelings are mutual. Even when there are tactical issues on which they share interest, Aoun and Hariri stubbornly refuse to contemplate working with each other, with each accusing the other of the original sin that prevents any possibility of cooperation. Saad occasionally sends Ghattas Khoury to meet with Aoun, but, as Ghattas tells us, these are pro-forma meetings, devoid of substance. We believe that the bad blood extends at least back to May 7, 2005, the day of Aoun's return to Lebanon after his 15-year exile: Avoiding the topics of Syria and Rafiq Hariri's assassination altogether, Aoun used the occasion of his first speech in Martyrs' Square to denounce "financial politics" (a universally understood reference to Hariri) and "feudal politics" (a swipe at Jumblatt).

¶24. (C/NF) Hariri has been convinced ever since that Aoun was sent back to Lebanon by the Syrians to divide the March 14 movement, and he is convinced that Aoun is a witting accomplice in the current pro-Syrian resurgence. For his part, Aoun seems to resent that Hariri's refusal to recognize Aoun as the head of the pro-independence movement or to support Aoun's presidential aspirations. The March 14

BEIRUT 00001915 006 OF 007

Christians who are allied with Hariri, of course, are most threatened by Aoun's popularity (especially when the presidency is discussed). It is a safe bet that they feed Hariri stories about Aoun that fuel the antipathy.

HARIRI'S VIEWS OF HIZBALLAH

¶25. (C/NF) Hariri is proud of, and loyal to, his Sunni heritage, to the point of being slightly, but unconsciously, prejudiced against those of other confessions (During a chance meeting with one of our political FSNs, an aide whispered to Hariri that the FSN was trustworthy because "he's one of us," i.e. a Beirut Sunni.) Even if they share Lebanese citizenship, he sees Lebanon's Shia as something altogether different, and potentially even threatening. We believe that, above all, his relations with Lebanon's Shia leaders are governed by his desire to manage Shia-Sunni tensions in ways to avoid open conflict where the Sunni would surely lose out to the better-armed Shia. This fear of Shia-Sunni conflict is at the heart of why Hariri tends to use a softer tone when discussing Hizballah publicly than he uses regarding other topics.

¶26. (C/NF) Hariri had an electoral alliance with Hizballah for the 2005 legislative elections in the Beirut and West Biqa' districts (similar to Jumblatt's electoral alliance with Hizballah for the Baabda-Aley district and Aoun's with Hizballah for Zahle). But this alliance has since evaporated, with Hariri expressing disgust over some recent Hizballah tactics (such as Hizballah demonstrators on May 10 and June 1 chanting anti-Rafiq slogans). Based on comments Hariri has made to us and others, it seems that he now knows not to trust Nasrallah or Hizballah. He expressed particular outrage to us about what he saw as a Hizballah about-face in the National Dialogue, when Nasrallah tried to revisit and water down the requests the National Dialogue forwarded to Damascus. We have heard from several sources that Hariri had to intervene personally via overseas telephone calls to keep the guards around his father's tomb from firing at Shia demonstrators on June 1 who were chanting insults about Rafiq from just outside the tomb area.

¶27. (C/NF) While he publicly gives verbal support to the "resistance" much more than we like, our guess is that he is pursuing expediency, not principle. Consistent with his deal-making-behind-closed-doors tendencies, Hariri still meets periodically with Nasrallah, often for hours at a time.

His March 14 allies look askance at these Hariri-Nasrallah encounters, as they fret that the less experienced Hariri will be outfoxed by Nasrallah. (People who see Nasrallah tell us that Nasrallah finds Hariri naive in these lengthy sessions.) Hariri seems to be looking for acceptable working arrangements with Hizballah rather than any broad strategic alliance. Our conclusion is that Hariri hates Hizballah for a variety of reasons -- pro-Syrian allegiances, possible complicity in assassinations such as his father's, ties to Iran, threats to Sunni predominance, etc. -- but feels he has no choice but to work with Hizballah for the time being. Regional developments and growing Sunni-Shia tensions in the Gulf reinforce his basic distrust of Hizballah.

SAUDI AND FRENCH INFLUENCE

¶28. (C/NF) Saudi Ambassador to Lebanon Abdelaziz Khoja

claims that the Saudi royal family has a sentimental attachment to Saad out of deference to the memory of Rafiq but that Saudi Arabia's political influence is now, by design, more limited than it was when Rafiq was alive. We question this statement. A major part of the Hariri fortune remains based in Saudi Arabia, giving Saudi Arabia considerable financial leverage over Saad. (A persistent rumor circulates in Beirut that Saudi Arabia is paying Hariri at a most leisurely pace for millions of dollars of services rendered, in order to keep Hariri a bit financially squeezed and thus susceptible to Saudi influence.) Earlier this year, when Hariri publicly criticized the so-called "Saudi initiative" to calm Syrian-Lebanese relations (through steps that even a casual reader could see clearly favored Syria), the Saudi royal family was reportedly deeply annoyed.

¶29. (C/NF) We do not know for certain who in Saudi royal family is closest to Saad, and we defer to any information Embassy Riyadh might have. We note, however, that Walid Jumblatt and Marwan Hamadeh frequently refer to Saad's relations with Abdulaziz bin Fahd. Jumblatt has also

BEIRUT 00001915 007 OF 007

mentioned friendship between Saad and Prince Bandar (perhaps dating from Saad's Georgetown days, when Bandar was the KSA's ambassador in Washington) and a "Prince Mukram.

¶30. (C/NF) As for France, the real French-Lebanese axis bypasses Saad, running instead through the phone line between Nazek Hariri and Jacques Chirac. French Ambassador Emie has told us that Nazek and Chirac often talk multiple times a day. Given Nazek's hatred for Siniora, this probably accrues to Saad's benefit by default. Certainly Saad has unusual access to Chirac, visiting the French President twice in as many weeks. While we have no evidence one way or another, we note the persistence of the rumors that Chirac has benefitted from Hariri money. We know of one recent example where the limits of Chirac's influence were clear: two weeks ago, Chirac told Hariri not to return to Lebanon for his own safety. Hariri chose to ignore that advice in favor of returning for the National Dialogue and addressing the deteriorating relationship with Siniora.

U.S. INFLUENCE WITH HARIRI

¶31. (C/NF) Hariri listens to us, but it is hard to predict when he is swayed by our arguments. It is clear, however, from two examples that he wishes to avoid our public criticism. After listening to our description of how we would react to him publicly meeting with Nasrallah and traveling to Iran (two appallingly bad decisions he said he had already made), he backtracked, so far doing neither. He has not, however, dropped his verbal support for the "resistance," despite our repeated requests, nor has he accepted our suggestion that he treat Siniora more like a partner than a hired hand.

¶32. (C/NF) When we have an important message for him, we try whenever possible to combine our messages with those of French Ambassador Emie and, depending the issue, others (Geir Pedersen from the UN, the Saudi and Egyptian Ambassadors, etc.). Soon after the 2005 legislative elections, for example, when Saad had zeroed in on two potential PM candidates -- Siniora and Tabbarah -- Emie and the Ambassador both explained why Siniora would probably be the better choice. While we can predict that Nazek was pushing in exactly the opposite direction, we do not know whether our interventions were decisive in Saad's decision-making process or not.

HARIRI'S SECURITY DETAIL

¶33. (C/NF) Hariri does not share details of his security arrangements with us, nor have we pressed him to do so. From

what we can see from casual observation, he (like all of us here) utilizes a variety of tools: layers of perimeter security that include checkpoints, bomb dogs, surveillance detection, etc.; reliance on surprise and multiple motorcades for movements; "decoy" meetings set up only to be cancelled later; etc. Both GOL and Hariri-provided security in the Qoreitem neighborhood where Hariri's house is located is far heavier today than in Rafiq Hariri's lifetime. The streets directly in front and behind the house are now closed to through traffic.

FELTMAN